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General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

94th plenary meeting
Friday, 10 September 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Expression of sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of the countries of the Caribbean in connection with the recent hurricanes in that region

The President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like, on behalf of the members of the General Assembly, to extend our deepest sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of the countries of the Caribbean, particularly Grenada, the Bahamas, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Cuba, for the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage that they have suffered from the recent hurricanes in the area.

In addition, even as we speak, the countries of Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the United States are being threatened by yet another hurricane. We hope that they will be spared. May I also express the hope that the international community will show solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any requests for assistance and any appeal for aid from the countries in the Caribbean in their present plight.

I now call on the representative of Grenada.

Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada): Let me, on behalf of my delegation, first thank our President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, for bringing to the attention of the international community, in a most forceful and appealing manner, the plight of my country, Grenada, which has been especially ravaged by killer hurricane "Ivan the Terrible", as it is now known.

I speak to you from the profound depths of my heart as I provide a bird's-eye view of the unspeakable fury and incalculable destruction wrought by this category-4 hurricane, packing 140-mile-per-hour winds as its eye traversed our small island for two hours. It swept away everything in its path, including human lives, buildings, trees, vegetation and whatever else it could find. Most of the buildings are reduced to rubble. The few left standing are roofless and without windows. The country is without electricity, has little food and water, and communication within and outside Grenada has been at a standstill for many days. Schools, hospitals, churches, police stations and even the prison are either damaged or destroyed. In short, the infrastructure of my country appears to be non-existent. This has dramatically changed the social and ecological landscape of the country. We are teetering on the slippery slope of infrastructural destruction.

However, thanks to neighbouring islands in the Caribbean and to the British, French and Americans in the region, a semblance of life is returning, as emergency access is now being gained with great difficulty. Since 90 per cent of the country has been destroyed, we are now facing an Herculean task, which can only be met by massive assistance from the international community for an immediate and sustained period. This is why I am making this appeal to the General Assembly of the United Nations and its agencies and to individual countries, individual

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permanent representatives and friends, as well as non-governmental organizations to help relieve the dire situation of my country, which is facing unprecedented perils.

The vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters is an Achilles heel over which we have no control. Nature, in its supremacy — sometimes benevolent, sometimes destructive — holds a threatening sword of Damocles over our islands. This is directly related to our economic vulnerability, which must seriously be addressed at the upcoming international meeting in Mauritius. In the meantime, Grenada cannot wait. The suffering and the economic misery index of the country have reached staggering and disastrous proportions.

Finally, this may very well be the last opportunity I will have to speak to this honourable body on behalf of my country. I shall demit office at the end of this month as permanent representative, having served almost 13 years and having attained the respectable age of 84 years. I therefore take this opportunity to say farewell and God bless.

The President: I thank the representative of Grenada. The Chair notes his impending departure and would like to wish him well, to congratulate him for the tremendous contribution that he has made on behalf of his country to the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole and to wish him all the best in the future.

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: Next I would like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/58/855/Add. 1 to 3, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/58/855, Benin, Cape Verde and Mauritania have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in these documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reports of the General Committee

Fifth report of the General Committee (A/58/250/Add.4)

The President: In the second paragraph of its report (A/58/250/Add.4), the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, submit to the Assembly at its forthcoming session, in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) of the annex to Assembly resolution 58/316, section II of the report of the Secretary-General, which is entitled "Provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the Organization, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005" and which is contained in document A/58/864.

May I take it that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, decides to submit to the Assembly, at its forthcoming session, in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) of the annex to resolution 58/316, section II of the report of the Secretary-General?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 3 of the same document, the General Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, submit to the Assembly, at its forthcoming session, in accordance with paragraph 5 (d) of the annex to resolution 58/316, annex I to the report of the Secretary-General, which is entitled "Draft programme of work of the plenary of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session" and which is contained in document A/58/864, as orally revised on the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the European Union, that item 46 of the draft agenda, "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", be considered in a joint debate with item 56 of the draft agenda, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

May I take it that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, decides to submit to the Assembly, at its forthcoming session, in accordance with

paragraph 5 (d) of the annex to resolution 58/316, annex I to the report of the Secretary-General, as orally revised on the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the European Union, that item 46 of the draft agenda be considered in a joint debate with item 56 of the draft agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I will inform the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session of the decisions just taken, by a letter that will be issued as a document of that session.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform members that the closing meeting of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly will be held in the General Assembly Hall on Monday, 13 September 2004, at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.